

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02590 181506Z

44

ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF ABRAHAM BENNATON

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2356

1. HONDURAN LEGAL SOURCES REPORT THAT THE CASE OF FORMER MINECON BENNATON IS STILL IN THE SECOND APPEALS COURT WHICH WILL AFFIRM OR REVERSE THE FIRST CRIMINAL COURT'S DECISION THAT THERE IS EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT CHARGE OF COHECHO (PERSONALLY PROFITTING FROM PUBLIC POSITION) AND OFFENSES AGAINST THE DIGNITY OF THE REPUBLIC BUT NOT TO SUSTAIN A CHARGE OF FISCAL FRAUD. THE LATTER CHARGE IS NOT BONDABLE WHICH THE FIRST TWO ARE. BENNATON REMAINS FREE ON BOND.

2. CURRENT RUMORS BEGUN BY COURT INSIDER GAJHNVHAT PROCURADOR GENERAL (ATTORNEY GENERAL) SERAPIO HERNANDEZ SUBMITTED THE GOVERNMENT'S CASE IMPROPERLY TO THE APPEALS COURT AND THAT THE CRIMINAL COURT'S JUDGMENT WILL BE SUSTAINED ON THAT BASIS. IF THIS IN FACT HAPPENS, BENNATON'S CASE WOULD BE RETURNED TO THE FIRST CRIMINAL COURT WHERE HE WOULD BE TRIED FOR COHECHO AND OFFENSES AGAINST THE DIGNITY OF THE REPUBLIC. IF CONVICTED OF EITHER OR BOTH CHARGES, HE COULD LEGALLY PAY A FINE (ABOUT \$1,000) RATHER THAN SERVE A JAIL SENTENCE.

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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02590 181506Z

3. ANOTHER PERSISTENT BUT UNCONFIRMED RUMOR IS THAT JOSE OCHOA Y MARTINEZ OF RADIO EMISORAS UNIDAS IS SERVING AS GENERAL LOPEZ' BAG MAN AND IS BOTH PASSING FUNDS TO BENNATON AS WELL AS PAYING JOURNALISTS TO DEFEND OR REFRAIN FROM ATTACKING HIM. ACCORDING TO THESE RUMORS, A MAJOR PRESS DEFENSE OF BENNATON IS TO BEGIN SHORTLY.

4. THERE IS LITTLE CURRENT PRESS COVERAGE OF THE LEGAL PROCESSES OF BENNATON'S CASE AND THE EDITORIAL COMMENTARY ON THE FUTURE OF UNITED BRANDS HAS VIRTUALLY CEASED.
SOWASH

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